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Students get close to nature

Modules combine fun with environmental education

STUDENTS can become stakeholders in conservation.

By playing an active role in healing habitats that are home to endangered animal species or in the rehabilitation of orang utans, these youngsters will serve as role models to the rest of society.

And now, they can do this by taking part in an exciting series of education programmes called *Wild@Heart*, which has been making news for its unique content and unusual delivery.

These modules, which combine environmental education with fun and adventure, take place in zoos, in orang utan rehabilitation centres and the wilderness of Borneo, and are facilitated by conservation biologists.

Aimed at students aged 12 and above, the programmes use iconic endangered Malaysian animals like

orang utans, pygmy elephants and tigers in settings from captivity to wild, to teach about animal behaviour, animal welfare, the condition of their natural habitat and all the different ways in which these habitats are used.



At one with nature: Wild@Heart participants trekking in a river in Sarawak

Student activities include observing orang utans and sun bears, working in enclosures and designing animal enrichment, which is critical for providing stimulus for captive animals.



Stimulus package: Youths sawing bamboo to make sun bear enrichment at Zoo Negara

Students taking part in the Corridor of Life project in the Lower Kinabatangan by helping in habitat restoration get a chance to view the spectacular bird and animal life.

Through their participation, the youth will gain an understanding of biodiversity, issues of sustainability and the process of orang utan rehabilitation in Sarawak.

Wild@Heart programmes are part of long-term on-going conservation programmes now managed by sustainable development

company Way Out Experiences (WOX) at several project sites around Malaysia, and allow students to work alongside WOX facilitators to ensure the realisation of conservation objectives.

The next *Wild@Heart* programme for students between the ages of 13 and 16 will be held in next month at Zoo Negara, Kuala Lumpur. For details, call 03-7724 2272.

<http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2009/11/10/central/5062632&sec=central>